



Broiler and Egg Association of Minnesota

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December 21, 2004

Division of Dockets Management (HFA305)
Food & Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Re: FDA Docket Numbers 1996P-0418, 1997P-1097, 1998P-0203 and 2000N-0504
RIN Number 0910-AC14
Prevention of Salmonella Enteritidis in Shell Eggs During Production

The Broiler and Egg Association of Minnesota (BEAM) is a trade organization representing the egg layer industry – both farms and allied businesses – in Minnesota. Our members are extremely interested in the proposed egg regulations relating to prevention of Salmonella Enteritidis. We support improving food safety but have concerns with the tactics that FDA is proposing.

We realize that others have submitted comments that offer far greater detail on proposed components of the regulations. Specifically, we support the comments offered by the Salmonella Committee of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the United Egg Producers (UEP). In addition, we reiterate the following areas:

1. Create a structure for industry and the federal government to work cooperatively to develop an SE prevention program. The egg laying breeding companies have successfully eliminated SE through USDA's National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP). NPIP is a model of how industry and government can work together. The egg laying industry is committed to improving food safety for consumers. NPIP offers the structure for us to develop such a program. It appears that FDA did not discuss proposed regulations with any of the recognized avian health experts with experience in eradicating SE from breeder operations. NPIP, or a related framework, insures the inclusion of industry experts in the process of establishing programs that accomplish the identified goal.
2. Vaccination should be included in the proposed regulation.
3. The cost of the proposed program is underestimated and overly burdensome on the farm operations. If these regulations are adopted, significant costs will be added to egg laying farms. As currently proposed, FDA is requiring farmers to


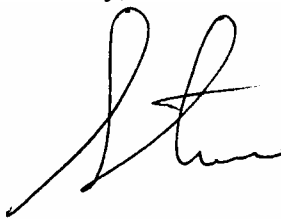
pay for a solution to a health issue that benefits the general public. The result will be farms with between 3,000 and 100,000 layers going out of business.

4. Egg laying operations below 3,000 layers need to be included in an SE prevention program. If we are committed to preventing SE, it is imperative that the whole industry be included in the program. Again, the cost of FDA's proposed program needs to be restructured because as currently proposed, farmers with less than 3,000 layers will be forced out of business.
5. Remove wet cleaning from the proposed regulation.
6. Remove the inclusion of a "pest" control program from the regulation. We know that rodents have an epidemiological link to SE, but there is no research to indicate that flies play a role in infecting layers.

Minnesota's egg industry is firmly committed to reducing SE in eggs; however we do not support the methods that FDA is currently proposing. We suggest that more research be conducted and that industry experts be included in further FDA discussion regarding proposed SE in eggs regulations.

Please contact me with any questions 763.682.2171 or Steve@MinnesotaTurkey.com

Sincerely,



Steven H. Olson
Executive Director

Cc
Senator Mark Dayton
Senator Norm Coleman
Congressman Collin Peterson
Congressman Mark Kennedy
Congressman Gil Gutknecht
Congressman John Kline
Congressman Jim Ramstad